

Worthy Is The Lamb

Revelation 5:1-14

Adam and Eve: In The Pawn Business

Pawnshops came about as a way for someone to earn some quick cash. You take something valuable you own to a pawnshop and you sign a note promising to pay back the money you get with a lot of interest. If you cannot pay it off, the pawnshop owner gets to keep your valuable item.

The word pawn actually means “to hold something hostage”

Q: Think of the great fall in Genesis, involving Adam and Eve. In what way did they “pawn” off the most valuable thing they could ever have?

There is a great spiritual truth illustrated here. Before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve had something of the greatest value possible: a perfect relationship with God. They were heirs to everything God had created. It was a perfect situation.

****SLIDE****

They took that perfect situation and pawned it for the ultimate lie of Satan:

- That THEY could be like God
- That THEY could be the master of their own universe
- That THEY could make their own decisions without God’s guidance
- That THEY would determine on their own what is good and what is evil

Q: If you decide to take on the responsibility to make your own decisions without God, to choose what is right and wrong, what are the two possible outcomes? If you can choose to do right, you can also choose to do wrong. Before the fall, Adam and Eve brought their everything to God and took his guidance on everything. In fact, they wouldn’t even have to know what is right and wrong because they brought everything to him and then the ball was in God’s court.

Q: Take a very small child who is told by their father, “Go ahead, it is ok to take that candy bar on the bottom shelf without paying for it.” It is wrong what the child is doing, but is it his fault?

It is the father’s fault. The child put all its trust in the father. Adam and Eve at first turned to God (their father) for everything and if they did wrong (which they never did because God was guiding them for everything), it would have been on God, not them. Of course, God is perfectly righteous so all their actions would be exactly that, righteous and good, because they would always be following God’s will.

Then comes man's free will, given by God for one specific reason. True love, true respect, and true obedience is not possible without free will. If you cannot make a conscience choice to love someone, to do good, or to be obedient, then it is not true love, true good, or true obedience.

Q: Do you want to marry someone that is "programmed" to love you whether they want to or not? Would that be very special? Would that be true love?

Continuing with our pawnshop analogy...

Adam and Eve believed the lie of Satan and pawned what was most valuable to them for something that was absolutely worthless. We all do this same thing as well throughout our lives, many times. Now, humanity has become hostage and held by that evil pawnshop owner, Satan. We can try to pay the debt off, but we can never do it.

So who is able to pay the debt off? Who can pay the price for the sins of the world, including yours? Jesus Christ. When he died on the cross, he took the sins of the world with Him and now only through Him can we enter a relationship with God. There is no one truly righteous, not one, unless their righteousness comes from Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of Redemption

****SLIDE****

Q: The word redeemed means "to buy out of". What does it mean to you to be "redeemed" through Christ?

The word redeemed comes from the Greek word *exagorazo*, which means, "to buy out of". In ancient times, the agora was the marketplace where slaves were bought and sold (pawned). If you wanted to purchase a slave, you went to the agora, paid the purchase price, and took the slave out of the marketplace. **The slave was then considered "redeemed" because he had been purchased and was no longer for sale.**

Q: When you accept what Christ freely gives, salvation only through faith and belief in Him, are you considered "free" then? Or is it more of a "transfer"?

Q: Many people say, "I'm my own person. I do what I want to. I do not answer to anyone. I'm my own master". Do you think everyone has a master? If so, what are those masters?

We live in a world where many people think they are untouchable and not owned by anyone or anything. Even atheists take great joy that they do not answer to some god, but the real question is "what do they answer to"?

We switch our masters out constantly in our lives, but there is always definitely a master. **What could these masters be?**

- SELF
- Money

- Power
- Esteem
- Looks
- Popularity
- Sex
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Work
- Hobbies
- And many more....

POINT: When you accept Christ, you are being bought, you are being redeemed, and Jesus has paid the price for your sins. Your MASTER is no longer this world or the things and desires in it. There is a TRANSFER of ownership of your life to Jesus and with this transfer comes a transfer of POWER available from Christ through the Holy Spirit.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST:

You are not free to just do whatever you want because you are forgiven. You are free from the POWER of sin. You are given the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, indwelling in you to give you strength to overcome sin.

YOUR PAST REDEMPTION: You were (past tense) a prisoner of Satan, held hostage to sin and death, but now you are freed to be a child of God.

1 Peter 1:18-19: "You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold...but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ"

YOUR FUTURE REDEMPTION: Your redemption was purchased 2,000 years ago on the cross and is applied to you right now. Even in your mess-ups, you are called to progressively become more like Him every day. It will all be fully realized in the future when *"there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; for the first things have passed away"* Revelation 21:4

The Seven-Sealed Book of Redemption

How will this future redemption be accomplished and creation restored to its original state?

The answer to that is in this chapter 5, which is a continuation of the worship of God in Chapter 4. In the original text, there was no chapter break between chapter 5 and 6.

REVELATION 5:1

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SCROLL HELD?

THE FORM OF THE BOOK: What John saw in God's hand was a scroll, not a book with sheets of papers bound together between two covers. It was a single sheet that unrolled continuously. In those days, sheets were even glued together if needed.

PURPOSE OF SCROLLS IN JESUS' TIME: A scroll was sealed to protect the content from being tampered with but this scroll had not one, but seven seals. In Roman law, wills were required to be sealed seven times because they contained information so sensitive. As the scroll was unrolled, the first seal was broken and a portion unrolled, then the second seal, and that portion unrolled, and so on. The seals had to be broken in order.

All of heaven waited with expectancy as God held this scroll in His hand.

THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK: The contents of the scroll are laid out in Revelation 6-8, so we will have to wait in anticipation, but to give it a description of a few words would be that this is the "*book of redemption*".

A BACKGROUND OF SCROLLS IN JEWISH HISTORY

In OT times, God gave every Jew a part of the Promised Land per tribe. If the people fell on hard times, they could "pawn" their land for quick cash. The only one who could redeem that land was called a fellow Jew, called a "kinsman-redeemer". If you pawned your land, a scroll was written called the book of forfeiture that listed all the embarrassing details about how you lost your land. The scroll was sealed so no one could read it.

There was a second scroll called the book of redemption that described the terms for buying back (redeeming) the forfeited land. Eventually both scrolls were put together and sealed up. The inside revealed the reason the land was lost, and the outside contained the terms of redemption.

What kind of description did John give of the scroll held by God? It was written "on the inside and the back." This is interesting given the background we have of OT Jewish scrolls and how the book of forfeiture and the book of redemption were put together and sealed up (the inside and outside revealing different things)

I think this seven-sealed book serves the same purpose for mankind. It shows how the paradise God created was forfeited to Satan and also shows the events that must take place for this universe to once and for all be redeemed and delivered to its rightful owner, God the Father.

The Lamb of Redemption

REVELATION 5:2-4

Q: WHAT IS EVERYONE SEARCHING FOR

Here we have a search throughout heaven. What is the search for? Who is worthy to open the scroll and break the seals? No created being, whether on heaven or earth, was able to

open the scroll or to look into it. Who could be found to open it is what John and the strong angel wanted to know.

Why did John weep when no one could open the scroll? In Revelation 4:1, what did the voice promise to show John? “What must take place” if the world is going to be delivered out of Satan’s ownership. If the scroll was not opened, the world would remain under Satan’s domain and the redemption of creation would remain postponed until someone worthy was found to open the scroll.

REVELATION 5:5

Q: WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLLS?

What answer did one of the elders give John? The elder gave two different titles for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, which could only be filled by Him in title and promise; “The Lion of Judah” and “The Root of David.”

REVELATION 5:6-7

Q: WHAT DOES JOHN SEE? WHY A “LITTLE LAMB” AND NOT A “ROARING LION”?

John saw a lamb, and when he used the word “lamb”, it was not the typical Greek word for lamb. Throughout Revelation, the word John used was *arnion*, meaning “little lamb”. This was a cute, cuddly ewe lamb – the kind you would take home as a pet. It was this kind of lamb also conveyed in Isaiah and Jeremiah’s description of the Messiah being led to slaughter.

Why did John use this word for a lamb? Simple. Innocence! Jesus willingly submitted to God the Father. Jesus shed His rights as God to give Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Yet, this gentle Lamb also had “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.” What do these images represent?

- **The Seven Horns:** Throughout scripture, horns represent power and seven is the biblical number for completion. This represents Jesus’ omnipotence. He has “all authority...in heaven and in earth.” Matthew 28:18
- **The Seven Eyes:** Eyes represent divine wisdom or discernment in Scripture. This represents Jesus’ omniscience. He sees and knows all. Zechariah 4:10 “The eyes of the Lord....range to and fro throughout the earth.”
- **The Seven Spirits of God:** As we’ve discussed twice now, this represents the Holy Spirit in all His divine attributes

What transfer happens when God hands this scroll to this Lamb? This is a seismic transfer of authority in the universe. God the Father takes this scroll containing the events that will bring about the end of the world and the return of Christ, and He hands this all-important scroll of authority to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

The Hymns of Redemption

REVELATION 5:8-10

Q: HOW DOES THE SCENE CHANGE WHEN THE “LAMB” RECEIVES THE SCROLL?

What happens in the inauguration of a new President? A twenty-one-gun salute and the playing of “Hail to the Chief”. **What happens in Great Britain when the power is transferred to a new monarch?** The people shout, “God save the queen!”

What do we see happen when this transfer of power from God the Father to God the Son? How does this scene suddenly change? Instead of weeping, there is now worshipping! This exchange triggered an outpouring of praise and worship of the Lamb!

THE PRAISE OF THE LIVING CREATURES AND THE CHURCH

Does only the church begin this huge outpouring of worship to the Lamb? All the elders and the four living creatures fell down before the Lamb. **Based on what we learned about the four living creatures, what significance could this have (the creatures worshipping)?** The creatures are significant because it represents all creation praising Jesus, not just the church.

What objects did John point out the elders/saints had? John said they were carrying harps, though we don’t know the significance to this, but harps are the only other instruments mentioned in the Bible being in heaven besides trumpets.

What could be the significance of the “golden bowls full of incense?” Did God just like keeping air freshener or potpourri around to make things smell nice? Take a look at Psalm 141:2, just as one example. **What do you think this incense stands for?** More than once in the Bible, it mentions prayers being like pleasant incense in the nostrils of God. The picture we see in Revelation 5 is that all our prayers had been collected into bowls.

Do you believe God just forgets your prayers? Do you ever put a time limit on God’s answering of your prayer, and if he doesn’t answer it by so-and-so time, he has forgotten it? Does God always answer your prayer in the way you want Him to?

The bowls of prayers are the prayers remembered by God, each and every one of them. They have not been forgotten and He will answer them in His way, in His time, according to His will. The deepest longings in your heart, the things you pray most often about, will ultimately be answered when the title deed of this world is transferred back into God’s ownership.

Do you believe, truly believe, God WILL make all wrongs right in the end, even if you don’t see it happen in your time on earth??? This is one of the tougher things for Christians to do sometimes and where you separate those of weak faith with those of strong faith.

What kind of song were they singing? One out of our hymnbook? A classic worship song? It was a “new” song. The Greek word for this use of “new” means “fresh” or “distinctive in

quality.” It was a song that had never existed before. **Why?** This song represents something that has never happened in all of creation. This world will be totally under the domain of God and sin will be eradicated forever.

REVELATION 5:11-14

Q: WHAT IS THE LAST FOUR VERSES DESCRIBING?

THE PRAISE OF ANGELS

Not only were the elders and four creatures praising the Lamb, but who else was? The angels.

What does this tell you about the Lamb’s power? Was it over just creation, as we know it?

The Lamb, Christ, had dominion over the angels as well. If we take John’s number literally, myriad, that would be two hundred million angels (a myriad is twice ten thousand, or twenty thousand). Note though the Bible never mentions how many angels there are.

What do you think this would sound like? It must have been overwhelming like nothing ever heard on earth!

In verse 12, notice the seven perfect attributes being repeated. What were they? Power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, and blessing.

There is a literary device called polysyndeton, that is meant to emphasize each attribute. That is the repetitive use of “and” between each word. In the original Greek, there were no commas between these words as even my Bible has in it.

What do you think John, using this literary device, is trying to tell us about each of these attributes concerning Jesus? He possesses each of these attributes in abundance, perfectly and completely. There is no end to His resources to meet the needs that you have!!

THE PRAISE OF ALL CREATION

Who joins in on the praise-fest for the Lamb next? All of creation. Just like the angels, and the creatures, all creation focused on these divine attributes of Jesus by repetition of “and”.

Does any location jump out of you as odd when John names all the places Jesus was being praised from? John makes a curious reference to those who are “under the earth.” **Who are these people?** If you are a Christian, when you die, your spirit goes to be with the Lord. When non-Christians die, their spirit goes to hades, which is somewhat of a temporary waiting place of the dead until the great white throne judgement.

Just how seismic is this event of the scroll being passed from God the Father to God the Son?

It appears that even for a brief moment, the unsaved in hell will look up and praise Jesus Christ. It will be too late, but they, along with every created thing angel or human, will recognize Him for who He is. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord one day.

Where do we go next?

The Lord and the Redeemer who is the object of our worship and praise is also the righteous judge who is about to unleash this judgement on the earth. Beginning in Chapter 6, death and destruction begins to be released on the world. We may not know the specifics, but there is one thing we do know:

That day has not arrived yet and we still have a choice!!!

That day has not arrived yet and we still have a job to do!!